

NEWS RELEASE

Office of Attorney General Terry Goddard



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Calls on Arizonans with information to come forward to help catch shooters

Attorney General Goddard calls shooting of Sikh an intolerable racist attack

(Phoenix, Arizona—May 21, 2003) Attorney General Terry Goddard today condemned the shooting of Avtar Singh Cheira as a racist attack that will not be tolerated. Cheira, a Sikh, was gunned down in north Phoenix by attackers who shouted "Go back where you belong" before they shot him.

Cheira, who wears a turban as part of his Sikh faith, is recovering in a Phoenix hospital.

Goddard pledged to use the force of his office to encourage anyone with information to come forward to either Rick Romley at the Maricopa County Attorney's Office or the Civil Rights Division of the Arizona Attorney General's Office.

"Hatred and firearms are a lethal combination," said Goddard. "Arizona needs to send a clear message that shameful acts of cowardice and racism will not be tolerated in our state. People should never fear for their safety because of their faith, color, nationality...or because of what they're wearing. It's unlawful, immoral and un-American."

Persons with information or those who believe they have been a victim of a hate crime can call the Maricopa County Attorney's Hate Crimes hotline at (602) 506-5000 or the Attorney General's Civil Rights Division Hate Crime Hotline at 602-542-5263 in the Phoenix metro area or 1-877-491-5742 statewide.